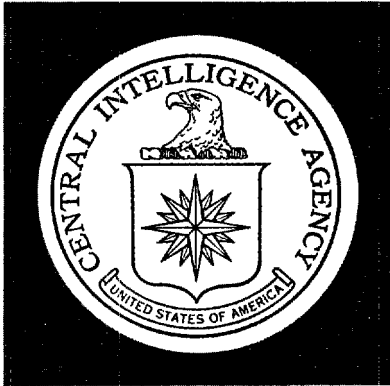


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

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14 March 1969

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Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A013300030002-9

Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A013300030002-9

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Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A013300030002-9

Venezuela: Legalization of the Venezuelan
Communist Party is imminent.

For some months, negotiations have been under way between Communists and Christian Democrats over restoration of constitutional rights to the Communist Party and its members. These rights were suspended in September 1963 when Communist insurgent activities in Venezuela were at their height.

In return for assurances that the orthodox Communists have abandoned guerrilla warfare and terrorism, the new government apparently is willing to legalize their party and grant amnesty to certain political prisoners and exiles.

The Caldera government hopes these tactics not only will remove a potential source of insurgency but also will widen the split between proponents and opponents of armed struggle within the party and between the several left extremists groups now active in Venezuela. The Communist leadership probably hopes that by espousing peaceful political activities it will gain the respite it needs to rebuild party strength for a time when it might wish to switch back to more militant tactics.

NOTE

West Germany - Communist China: Bonn is examining its policy toward Communist China but apparently plans no move toward recognition at this time. Egon Bahr, chief of policy planning in the foreign office who has recently returned from a Far Eastern trip, has recommended a "wait-and-see" policy on recognition. Bahr frequently advocates new policy directions and has influence with Foreign Minister Brandt. As he has earlier, Brandt spoke out again this week on the desirability of improving bilateral ties with Peking, but he focused on trade, not political relations.

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